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ABSTRACT

This paper offers a comparative analysis of the organization of higher education research in Russia and the United States. It notes that in the United States higher education is generally viewed as a field of study, whereas in Russia higher education is considered to be an area of emphasis associated with individual disciplines. The paper first describes the overall Russian system of higher education and its research infrastructure and then offers an historical overview of the system's development. The paper also examines the mechanisms of promotion, dissemination, and research funding in higher education in Russia. It concludes that Russian education would benefit from the interdisciplinary approach to higher education research and urges the establishment of graduate programs in higher education administration that would also prepare researchers for the study of higher education. (Contains 26 references.) (DB)

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Research on Higher Education in Russia:

Is It Ever to Become an Interdisciplinary Endeavor?

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Research on Higher Education in Russia:

Is It Ever To Become An Interdisciplinary Endeavor?

Introduction

My personal interest in comparative analysis of Russian and American educational systems comes from my identity as a Russian scholar and educator who has experienced Russian and American graduate education, and who has constantly struggled to explain the numerous differences between the two systems to his colleagues from both the countries. This paper therefore presents the attempt to systematize my findings and observations of the two systems of higher education and to offer my insights on the future of research on higher education in Russia.

There are various ways of defining and understanding higher education research. In the United States, for example, higher education is generally viewed as a field of study. In 1989, Clifton (1989) argued that higher education "should be viewed as a field like public administration, one that is multidisciplinary and organized around subject matter rather than a particular method of inquiry" (p. 202). In concert with this view go Terenzini's (1996) definition of higher education as a multidisciplinary, applied field of study and Altbach's (1997) understanding of higher education as an interdisciplinary field of scholarly inquiry. As a field of study, higher education in the United States possesses several attributes. It has graduate programs designed to prepare professionals for the field of higher education; scholars who think of themselves as specialists in the study of higher education; a growing body of literature dealing with various parts of higher education domain; and research centers, professional associations of researchers, and peer-reviewed journals.

In contrast, higher education in Russia is considered to be an area of emphasis associated with individual disciplines. Put differently, a historical study of a college or university is most likely to be viewed as a contribution to history as a discipline, rather than as a contribution to higher education as a field of study. This approach to higher education research contributed to isolation of scholars from various disciplines from each other, which considerably hindered research in the field given complex,

multidisciplinary nature of many problems in higher education. Additionally, the uneven geographic distribution of the infrastructure for higher education research in Russia hindered the effectiveness of the production of research on higher education in the country. The provincial higher education institutions and research institutes and centers with their scanty research resources have always been disadvantaged. They have continuously played a minor role in generating high-quality research when compared with performers of research from the largest cities.

Through comparative analysis of the organization of higher education research in Russia and the United Sates, this paper describes some constraints and opportunities of both the approaches to higher education research outlined above. It begins with a description of the overall Russian system of higher education and its research infrastructure, and then provides a brief historical overview of the system's development. The paper also examines the mechanisms of promotion, dissemination, and funding of research on higher education in Russia. It concludes with a discussion on the future of research on higher education in Russia.

A Brief Overview of the Russian System of Higher Education

Scale of the Russian Higher Education

The system of higher education in the Russian Federation is comprised of nearly 550 state and 180 non-state institutions. In the 1994-1995 academic year, these colleges and universities employed 230,000 faculty members and served about 3 million students (Lugachyov, Markov, Tipenko, & Belyakov, 1997; Nikandrov, 1997; Prokopchuk, 1994). Additionally, there are over 150 branch campuses in Russia, offering baccalaureate and graduate education. These affiliates are essentially separate institutions as they are independent of their respective main campuses in terms of administration and funding.

Graduate education in Russia is offered through graduate programs at higher education institutions and at specialized research institutes controlled by the Academy of Sciences, the Academy of Pedagogical Sciences, and other academies. Out of approximately 550 state-supported institutions of higher education, 310 (or 57%) provide graduate education and grant "Candidate of Science" and "Doctor of Science" degrees (Lugachyov, Markov, Tipenko, & Belyakov, 1997, p.150). The two graduate level

degrees can be considered to be roughly equivalent to an American Ph.D. (Degree, Encyclopedia Britannica, 1995, p. 962; Rabkin, 1994, p. 1049). Additionally, 444 research institutes of the Russian Academy of Sciences, 15 research centers of the Academy of Education (formerly, the Academy of Pedagogical Sciences), and research institutes under the aegis of other academies confer doctoral degrees as well (Loxley, 1994; Kudriavtzev, 1995).

By comparison, in 1995, higher education in the United States consisted of 3,706 colleges and universities, including 2,244 four-year and 1,462 two-year institutions. In the same year, American colleges and universities employed 910,000 instructors and enrolled 14,262,000 students (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1997). Graduate education in the United States is offered at 104 research universities, 109 doctoral-granting universities, and 595 master's level institutions. Out of the total 808 institutions that provide graduate level education, 343 are private (Clark, 1992, p. 142). In 1994, American colleges and universities awarded 43,185 doctoral and 387,070 master's degrees (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1997, p. 193).

Student Enrollment

During the 1994-1995 academic year, the student population at the Russian colleges and universities included 1.6 million traditional full-time students, 170,000 part-time students enrolled in evening programs, and about 750,000 part-time students enrolled in correspondence and distance learning programs. The latter type of programs is a typical feature of the Russian system of higher education. These correspondence and distance learning programs greatly extend the educational network by offering a broad array of carefully prepared correspondence courses, which are supplemented by radio and television broadcasts and augmented by regional study centers. In the 1980s, correspondence and evening program students made up 49% of the total higher education enrollment (Piskunov, 1996, p.22).

For convenience, some basic statistics on the scale of the Russian higher education over the period of 1985 through 1994 are presented in Table 1.

Table 1
Scale of Russian Higher Education

	Unit	1985	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994
Total Number of HED Institutions	Number	502	514	519	535	548	553
Total Enrollment	1,000	2,966	2,824	2,763	2,638	2,542	2,534
Annual Number of Entrants onto HED Institutions	1,000	634	584	566	520	543	615
Annual Number Of Graduates	1,000	476	401	406	425	443	406
Number of Faculty	1,000		220	224	228	229	233

Note. From "Structure and financing of higher education in Russia," by M. Lugachyov, A. Markov, N. Tipenko, and S. Belyakov, 1997, in P. G. Hare (Ed.), Structure and financing of higher education in Russia, Ukraine and the EU p. 147. Bristol, PA: Jessica Kingsley Publishers.

Table 1 shows that the number of institutions of higher education in Russia increased while the overall student enrollment decreased approximately 450,000 students between the period of 1985 and 1994. The decline in student enrollment mostly occurred in correspondence and evening programs for part-time students. As Piskunov (1996, p.22) notes, during the early 1990s, enrollment decreased by 20% in correspondence programs and 50% in evening programs. A key reason for the decrease in student enrollment is the decline in the number of students from the former republics of the U.S.S.R. Piskunov (1996) points out that "while, in 1986, some 30% of the first-year students at Moscow Institute of Electronic Technology came from republics outside Russia, the share of those students in 1992 constituted less than 10%" (p. 22).

Academic Degrees

The system of academic degrees in Russia differs significantly from its counterpart in the United States. In Russia, the discussion on academic degrees in educational discourse pertains only to graduate education. While the vocational and technical training sector in Russia, which is roughly equivalent to American community and junior colleges, provides some form of postsecondary education, it is not viewed

as a part of the country's higher education system. In other words, an American associate degree earned at a community college would not be typically seen in Russia as an academic degree from a higher education institution. This understanding of higher education in Russia accounts for the fact that information on the Russian education sector somewhat comparable to U.S. community colleges is never included in statistical sources on higher education, but usually listed as a part of vocational and secondary education. In 1994, the vocational and technical training sector in Russia included 4,273 vocational schools and 2,697 technical training schools, enrolling 3.73 million students (Lugachyov, Markov, Tipenko, & Belyakov, 1997, p.146). Out of this educational sector, the 2,697 technical training schools and colleges, enrolling approximately 2.3 million students, can be roughly comparable to U.S. community and junior colleges as these Russian institutions offer two-year and four-year programs and serve the purposes similar to those of two-year institutions in the United States. In 1990, the Russian technical training schools and colleges accommodated 35% of all high school graduates (Dneprov, 1993, p. 227).

Another difference in degree equivalence of the Russian and American systems of higher education concerns baccalaureate curricula of colleges and universities. The vast majority of Russian undergraduate programs last five years instead of the typical four years of baccalaureate study at the U.S. colleges and universities. This longer period of study may imply a level of education often more comparable to an Anglo-American master's degree rather than a baccalaureate degree (Hare, 1997, p.11). Graduates of these five-year programs receive a "diplom," a certificate that gives its recipients the right to be qualified as specialists in their respective areas of study. This "diplom" is not generally considered a research degree, but rather a qualifying certificate that allows the holders to continue to a further stage of study or to practice a profession. Similarly, the focus of American master's programs, according to Gumport (1993), is "on training the student for practice rather than for theory or knowledge development" (p. 239).

Further, unlike the usage of degree in English, the Russian word "degree" is most often used in combination with the adjective "academic" and strongly implies training in research. This understanding of an academic degree as the extent of academic achievement that includes highly developed research skills seems warranted if we analyze the original meaning of the word "degree." Encyclopedia Britannica

(1995) notes that originally there was only one degree in medieval European higher education, that of master or doctor. The baccalaureate education in the Middle Ages was simply a "stage toward mastership" that characterized apprentices' level of skills (Degree, Encyclopedia Britannica, 1995, p. 962). Thus, consistent with the original meaning of degree, the first academic degree in Russia is a graduate, research degree called "Candidate of Science." It is offered by graduate programs at universities and specialized research institutes subordinate to various ministries of the national economy. This research degree is awarded after several years of practical and academic work and defense of a dissertation and is comparable to the U.S. Ph.D. (Degree, Encyclopedia Britannica, 1995, p. 962).

The highest academic degree in Russia is the "Doctor of Science." It requires a considerably greater amount of time and effort to complete than an American Ph.D. In Russia, "Doctor of Science" degrees are awarded only by a special national committee in recognition of original and important research (Degree, Encyclopedia Britannica, 1995, p. 962). Typically, the academics, aspiring to receive the "Doctor of Science" degree, are expected to have at least several monographs published before completion of their programs. The average age of the academics with the "Doctor of Science" degree in Russia is approximately 58, which is near retirement age--55 for women and 60 for men (Piskunov, 1996, p.25).

Types of Higher Education Institutions

There are four key types of higher education institutions in Russia, including universities, academies, institutes, and colleges. A university combines all levels of higher, postsecondary, and continuing education with fundamental research. A leading center of culture and education, a university consists of several colleges or faculties in the sciences and the humanities and offers either five or five and a half year programs Prokopchuk, 1994, p. 33). The trend in recent years has been to change institutional names from "institutes" to more prestigious "universities" and "academies" (Holmes, 1995, p. 327). In 1992, there were 46 universities in Russia; this number increased to 94 in 1993, and to 141 in 1994.

An academy is characterized by undertaking research and providing education in one major field of science or the humanities. There are currently 78 academies with various fields of specialization in

Russia. Russian academies as a type of institution of higher education should not be confused with academies as organizations that combine the functions of an honorary society of distinguished scientists and scholars and a research center.

An institute offers specialized education and training programs in various fields of science, technology, and culture. Typically, a single institute specializes in a single field, such as law, medicine, agriculture, engineering, and art. Compared to academies, institutes tend to place less emphasis on research. There are about 330 institutes in Russia, providing education in 49 recognized specialities (Lugachyov, Markov, Tipenko, & Belyakov, 1997, p.150). A college may be either a separate educational institution, or a subdivision of a university or academy. It offers both complete and incomplete programs of higher education and training.

Governance and the Role of the Federal Government

A major difference between the Russian and American systems of higher education manifests itself in the federal government's role in controlling higher education. The U.S. system is characterized by decentralized control. The U.S. Department of Education has almost no control of higher education apart from the provision and oversight of federally provided student financial aid (Johnstone, 1997).

On the contrary, the Russian higher education is almost totally controlled by the federal government through its ministries. Today, the central governing body of the system of higher education is the Ministry of General and Professional Education. It was established in the fall of 1996 by the merger of two giant governing bodies: the State Committee on Higher Education, which had formerly been in charge of 222 institutions (including the most prestigious universities) and the Ministry of Education, which had formerly controlled 97 teacher training institutes and universities as well as the entire elementary and secondary education system (Kerr, 1998). Of the total 552 institutions, about 320 are now managed by the Ministry of General and Professional Education and the other 232 are managed directly by various ministries of the national economy, such as the Ministry of Health, Agriculture, Transportation, Culture and Sport, etc. This so-called "branch" principle of governance is a result of the structure of the past Soviet economy, which was a system of interconnected branches under the centralized

federal planning. In addition to its specialized research centers and institutes, each ministry operated its own network of educational institutions to train cadres for its purposes. At present, there are more than 20 ministries and other state governing bodies that manage their own higher educational institutions; 47 medical institutes are managed by the Ministry of Health, 67 agricultural universities, academies, and institutes by the Ministry of Agriculture, 43 institutions by the Ministry of Culture, and the rest by 19 separate ministries or departments (Lugachyov, Markov, Tipenko, & Belyakov, 1997, p.153-154).

Performers of Research on Higher Education

Traditionally, research in Russia is performed by two distinct entities: 1) specialized research institutes, centers, and laboratories and 2) departments within higher education institutions. The former is organized into two systems. The system of research institutes concerned with theoretical and fundamental research is under the jurisdiction of the Russian Academy of Sciences. The meaning of the Russian word "science" is similar to the broad German concept of "Wissenshaft" that embraces various kinds of knowledge, not only the exact and natural sciences, which is the common usage in English. Thus, the Academy of Sciences' research institutes conduct research in the social sciences and the humanities as well as in the exact and natural sciences. The second system, which is concerned mostly with applied research, is subordinate to and directly funded by various ministries. Included in this category are the Academy of Education and the Research Institute on Higher Education, the two major governmental research institutes that concern themselves with research on higher education. The former coordinates educational research on elementary, secondary, and higher education (Loxley, 1994), and the latter is responsible for research on higher education overall (Nikandrov, 1997).

Responsible only to their state sponsors, all these entities have functioned independently of each other. Thus, a very high proportion of research activity taking place at specialized research institutes is separated off from higher education per se, with the result that universities have become predominantly teaching institutions (Hare, 1997, p.5; Savelyev, 1991, p. 116; Uvalic-Trumbic, 1994, p. 64). The current organization of research on higher education in Russia also accounts for the fact that as performers of research university departments are perceived to be less effective than government and industry

specialized research institutes and labs in generating high-quality research. This point of view differs significantly from the perception of the effectiveness of university research in many developed countries. For example, in the United States, universities rank ahead of the federal government and industry in terms of both the amount and effectiveness of research (Gumport, 1993, p. 243).

Although specialized research institutes are considered to be major research producers in Russia, the academic staff at higher education institutions, particularly those in universities, academies, and teacher training institutes, play an important role in the arena of higher education research. Nikandrov (1997) argues that in spite of the lack of extrinsic rewards for conducting research, the vast majority of the 233,000 faculty members at higher education institutions in Russia produce a great number of materials, some of which can be regarded as research on higher education.

Historical background

According to Altbach (1997, p. 15), there was no clearly identified field of higher education studies in the world until the 1960s. In this respect, Russia was no exception in not establishing a tradition of systematic analysis in the field. The first books and articles on higher education in Russia appeared in the mid-nineteenth century. However, those were "sporadic publications written out of intellectual curiosity of the researchers, or occasionally in response to policy changes in higher education" (Nikandrov, 1997, p. 251). After the October Revolution of 1917, higher education in Russia grew substantially in terms of the number of students and institutions, which was due to the political and economic agendas of the Communist regime. As a result, the growing system of higher education triggered general interest in educational research and its dissemination in the country; several conferences on higher education issues were held during the 1920s (1997, p. 251).

Systematic research on higher education emerged only in the 1960s with the establishment of several chairs of higher education within departments of teaching and learning methodologies at several leading universities. Chairs, as defined by Clark (1983, p. 46), are "basic operating units" within a college of many European and Latin American universities characterized by a disciplinary or subfield organization and concentration of the academic and administrative responsibilities of the primary unit in

the chair holder's hands. Organized in response to the growing concerns of the government about the state of education in the country, the first such chair appeared at the Leningrad (now St. Petersburg) Pedagogical Institute in 1967. This marked the emergence of an institutional framework for research on higher education in the Soviet Union (Nikandrov, 1997, p. 251). It was assumed that the creation of such chairs, frequently called "chairs for higher school pedagogy and psychology" would improve higher education. The responsibilities of those chairs included providing professional development programs for the in-service training of teachers and conducting research on various issues of teaching and learning and on Communist character education (p. 252). In 1970s, the number of such chairs and departments increased as they were set up not only at pedagogical institutes and universities, but also at some polytechnical institutes and other higher education institutions throughout the country (p. 263).

Although the chairs of higher education and teaching methodology became important centers of higher education research, they were not devoid of shortcomings. One of the criticisms concerned the quality of research and publications. The socialist top-down command system of governance in the country did not allow for the expression of originality of thought and created the conditions in the higher education research community for the production of ideologically-charged research, which substantially undermined the quality of research and publications (Nikandrov, 1997, p. 255).

Critics also questioned the effectiveness of the in-service training of teachers offered by the chairs and departments of teaching and learning methodologies (Nikandrov, 1997, p.255). Ironically, although those chairs were involved in conducting research on teaching and learning at both secondary education and university levels, there were too few researchers specifically trained in higher education pedagogy (p. 253). There were no higher education graduate programs and course offerings on adult teaching and learning at any institutions of higher education in the entire country. As a result, professional development programs were conducted without the due application of methods regarding adult teaching and learning. Thus, the lecture continued to be the leading pedagogical technique. Interestingly, students of those programs were often referred to as "listeners" (p. 255), which presupposed the passive character of their involvement in the learning process.

Further institutionalization of higher education research in the Soviet Union occurred through the founding in 1966 of the Academy of Pedagogical Sciences and later through the founding in 1973 of the Research Institute on Higher Education in Moscow. The former was fully funded by the national government to conduct research in pedagogy and educational psychology, and to collect information on schooling nationally. In 1990, the Academy employed over 1,600 professional staff and had an annual budget of $14 million dollars (Loxley, 1994, p. 938). Created as a national center for conducting, disseminating, and coordinating research on higher education in the country, the latter organization, the Research Institute on Higher Education, employed 450 researchers and was designed to create a theoretical and empirical knowledge base in the field of higher education (Nikandrov, 1997, p. 252). However, as Nikandrov (p. 254) argues, the Institute failed to take the leading role in coordinating research all over the country. One reason for this was that the Institute was not able to attract or retain leading scholars due to the small salaries it offered.

Nevertheless, the Institute has become an important player in conducting research on higher education (Nikandrov, 1997, p. 253). On a contractual basis, it is currently involved in the advanced training of administrative personnel of institutions of higher education and other academic organizations. Its own publications represent an important forum for the presentation of research findings. Additionally, the Institute has a significant collection of documents and academic papers on higher education in Russia and other countries.

Some Characteristic Features of Research on Higher Education in Russia

The study of higher education in Russia differs conceptually and structurally from that in some developed countries. In the United States, Canada, Australia, and Great Britain, for example, higher education is studied as an interdisciplinary field of scholarly inquiry, a broadly defined area of academic research that cuts across various disciplines. The study of higher education as a field originated at Clark University in the United States where the first course on higher education was offered in 1893 (Dressel & Mayhew, 1974, p. 7). Since that time, the field has grown to an almost disciplinary status. In the United States alone, there are about 90 graduate programs that prepare administrators, researchers, and faculty

for positions in higher education at the doctoral level (Hearn, 1997, p. 275). In 1989, these programs offered 124 different higher education courses (Fife, 1991), enrolled 6,356 students and employed 357 full-time faculty (Nelson, 1991). Additionally, the study of higher education in the United States is characterized by numerous professional associations, a substantial literature on higher education issues, and peer-reviewed journals in the field. Indeed, the study of higher education undertaken collectively at such a large scale explicitly suggests colossal intellectual activity, production of a substantial body of knowledge, and qualitative and quantitative professionalization of a career in higher education teaching, research, and administration.

Unlike the U.S. where the study of higher education is an interdisciplinary endeavor, research on higher education in Russia is typically conducted within the boundaries of individual disciplines, such as psychology, pedagogy, sociology, economics, history, etc. Educational studies and specifically the studies in teaching and learning methodologies have been historically in the forefront of research on higher education in the country (Nikandrov, 1997). Recently, sociology has emerged as a discipline that produces a considerable number of publications in the field of higher education. This discipline occupied a marginal status under the socialist system due to its perception as a "bourgeois science," meaning ideologically pernicious.

Nowadays, the study of higher education in Russia is seen as peripheral to the research agendas in the current educational discourse dominated by elementary and secondary education issues. Excluded from the 49 established academic specialities, higher education in Russia is characterized by the lack of graduate programs that specifically prepare professionally educated administrative, faculty, and other staff members for institutions of higher learning in the nation. It should be noted, however, that the need for educating administrators is now recognized, as evidenced in the existence of professional development programs and some course offerings on administration and management in the curricula of higher education institutions in Russia.

Another idiosyncratic perception in Russia that affected the development of the system of higher education in the country in general and the study of higher education specifically is the mentality of centralization prevalent in the country, the belief that the most efficient use of resources will be achieved

through their concentration in one center. Thus, the tacit understanding in the country is that research on higher education should be a prerogative of central specialist research institutes. The result of this philosophy has manifested itself in the underdevelopment of the research activities at the Russian institutions of higher learning. To understand better the present situation in the area of higher education research in Russia, it is important to make use of historic knowledge. Interestingly, the first central research organization, the Academy of Sciences (1724), was founded in Russia 30 years earlier than the first university (1755). Modeled on the Berlin Academy of Sciences, the Russian Academy of Sciences was founded by Peter, the Great in order to attract prominent researchers from Europe (Rabkin, 1992, p. 1049). Thus, the framework for conducting research at central specialized organizations was in place from the very beginning of research activity in the country.

Still another idiosyncrasy of the Russian system of higher education, which is closely related to the mentality of centralization, is the inequality in geographic distribution of the infrastructure for higher education research. Russian higher education institutions are typically located in large administrative centers and metropolitan areas concentrated primarily in the European part of the country. There are 122 metropolitan areas with colleges and universities in Russia. Over 23% of all Russia's institutions of higher education are located in just two cities, Moscow and St. Petersburg; and 49% of the total number of institutions are concentrated in 15 cities (Kitaev, 1994, P. 119).

The inadequacy of research facilities in the provinces of Russia considerably impedes research activities of scholars from the provincial universities. Having worked in a provincial university, the author of this paper can personally attest to the scarcity of research resources in the provinces. The example of the work of provincial libraries is very telling in this respect. Unlike the libraries in Moscow and St. Petersburg with on-line computerized databases, the provincial counterparts still use the obsolete index card catalogues. The system of interlibrary loan is ineffective and inefficient. Sometimes, it takes months to loan a book from a library in another city, and the fact of ordering does not guarantee that the patron will be able to make use of the book. Under these circumstances, almost every scholar from the province has to undertake costly travels to the largest cities to be able to obtain access to better research facilities and resources.

Dissemination of Research

Higher education research in Russia is promoted and disseminated through a variety of mechanisms. Most important among these are scholarly books and monographs, journals, magazines and newspapers, and research papers and publications. There are two major state-owned publishers: Vyshaya Shkola (higher school) and Nauka (science). They publish and disseminate all the textbooks for secondary schools and higher education institutions, as well as scholarly books and monographs.

Additionally, ministries and their subordinated agencies and research organizations, which have their own publishing facilities, produce and disseminate research publications, journals, magazines, and newspapers in their respective fields. These organizations include the Russian Academy of Education, the Research Institute on Higher Education, the Scientific Council on Problems of Comparative Pedagogy, the Research Center for Quality Control in Higher Education, the International Higher Education Academy of Science, the International System Research Center for Higher Education and Science, etc. The most noted journals and newspapers in the field of higher education are Vysshiye Obrazovaniye v Rossii (higher education in Russia), Vestnik Obrazovania (education courier), Uchitelskaya Gazeta (teacher's newspaper), Voprosi Pedagogiki (pedagogical issues), Mir Obrazovaniia (world of education), Upravlenie Shkoly (school administration), and others. These publications now include a diversity of views and issues in higher education, since ideological purity is no longer a prerequisite and there are hardly any taboos on research topics (Nikandrov, 1997).

Furthermore, universities, academies, and institutes also publish and disseminate scholarly publications on higher education although much of this research is hardly known to anyone outside the institution in which it is produced. In the past, the vast majority of higher education institutions were able to publish various materials. At present, due to severe budget constraints, only 7% of Russian higher education institutions are able to maintain their publications at the Soviet-era level (Nikandrov, 1997, p. 256).

Recently, international governmental organizations and private foundations have begun to play an important role in promoting and disseminating scholarly publications in Russia. The most conspicuous

among these is the Soros Foundation. For example, in 1996, the Soros Foundation in Russia conducted a competition-based program "New Books for Social Science and the Humanities," which invited Russian scholars to submit their works for further publication. This was a competitive application and review process with the topics ranging from history, philosophy, and culture to psychology and political science to sociology and economy. As a result, 146 winners from among the authors of the submitted manuscripts were selected, and 70 new research-based books were published with the Foundation's support in 1996-1997 (Bakhmin, 1997).

Funding of Research on Higher Education

There are now three principal mechanisms of financing research on higher education in Russia: public funding for researchers employed by institutions of higher education, targeted public funding, and private funding (Nikandrov, 1997, p. 258-59). An established practice in institutions of higher education is that a third of faculty members' salaries is paid for scholarly activity related to higher education research. It is intended that the workload be divided between research itself and work on improving teaching methods (p. 259). However, the system does not provide a due compensation for the involvement in research activity in terms of adequate monetary rewards. Suffice it to say that the average salary of an associate professor now is a little more than $100 dollars per month (Lugachyov, Markov, Tipenko, & Belyakov, 1997, p.171), a fraction of what most U.S. universities pay to their graduate students. Although a more accurate comparison should be based on the purchasing power and other factors, it nevertheless can shed some light on the inadequacy of funding available for research on higher education at the Russian institutions of higher learning.

The second mechanism involves program specific funding for various research institutes and groups, and higher education institutions involved in nationwide research programs. The funding is appropriated by the Ministry of General and Professional Education (the ministry in charge of higher education) and administered by the Research Institute on Higher Education. Currently, there are three such programs: 1) the universities of Russia, 2) the higher education institutions for the Russian citizens, and 3) reforming higher education in the Russian Federation (Nikandrov, 1997, p. 258).

Finally, another new channel of financing research on higher education is currently emerging. It involves contracts for research activity to be conducted by faculty or departments for any individual or any public or private organization. However, it is still too early to assess fully the role this practice plays in funding research on higher education. The importance of this type of funding can best be described by the fact that researchers are now allowed to work on as many contracts as they can manage without any cap on their salaries. Just a few years ago, faculty members were supposed to occupy one permanent main position and get half the salary of a second job (Nikandrov, 1997, p.259). Overall, private funding is increasingly becoming more and more common. In this relation, a number of scholars note that, in 1993, institutions of higher education received up to 15% of their total funding from non-budget sources in addition to budget transfers (Lugachyov, Markov, Tipenko, & Belyakov, 1997, p.168).

One of these non-budget sources of funding higher education in general and research activities in particular is tuition and fees. In 1994, 46,000 (10% of the total enrollment) students of higher education institutions were charged tuition fees (p. 169). However, some researchers believe that this source of funding has a very uncertain future, due to the fact that the cost of education in relation to current average wages and salaries in the country is too high to be covered by students or their parents alone (Piskunov, 1996; Lugachyov, Markov, Tipenko, & Belyakov, 1997).

Discussion

The advantage of comparative analysis manifests itself in the ability to bring out the most useful features of the entities compared, while providing researchers with the opportunity to learn from these beneficial characteristics. In this regard, it is my belief that Russian educators will benefit greatly from the strengths of higher education research as an interdisciplinary field of study. The American experience demonstrates that graduate programs of higher education play a pivotal role in providing the foundation upon which higher education as a field of study rests. Thus, to lay a foundation for the study of higher education as an interdisciplinary endeavor in Russia the top priority today should be given to the establishment of graduate programs in higher education administration with the mission of preparing graduate students for administrative and scholarly careers in postsecondary education. The objectives of

these programs should include integrating theory and practice, maintaining strong interdisciplinary relationships, promoting activities that enhance leadership development, and developing high quality research skills.

It is clear that the establishment of graduate programs in higher education administration will definitely enhance the capacity of the Russian system of higher education to prepare well educated administrators capable of understanding the nature of academic institutions, their roles, and the key components--students and faculty. Additionally, such programs will train researchers specifically for the study of higher education and promote the wide range of research methods borrowed from various fields. The latter observation is considered as a strength by Altbach (1997, p. 6) who argues that using research methods from diverse disciplines has contributed to original and innovative research. The researchers with the expertise in higher education will undoubtedly contribute considerably to the creation and accumulation of the knowledge base of higher education research, which may be used for institutional planning and assessment. Furthermore, institutional research can be used as a vehicle of influencing public policymaking in higher education at the regional level. Finally, programs in higher education administration will provide assistance to universities in the in-service training of teachers and the organization of the teaching and learning process.

Careful planning and analysis of the overall system of higher education and its needs, goals and objectives will be needed to be able to establish the necessary number of programs in higher education at the Russian institutions of higher learning. Although it is difficult to determine a specific number of such programs to be established throughout the entire nation, it is now clear, however, that the creation of these programs in the provincial higher education institutions is especially vital given the lack of specialized research institutes and centers and the inadequacy of the infrastructure for research on higher education in the provinces.

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